

Application No.: 10/634,524 MAT-8438US
Amendment Dated: December 14, 2004
Reply to Office Action of: September 22, 2004

Remarks/Arguments:

The Official Action has required that Figure 10 be designated with the legend "PRIOR ART." Figure 10 has been so designated.

The specification has been objected to. The Examiner has made recommendations regarding how the specification should be amended. All of the Examiner's recommendations have been adopted. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 7 have been objected to because of various informalities. Those claims have been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions. Withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 7 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Noguchi (U.S. Patent No. 6,677,835) in view of Inoue (U.S. 2003/0062969). U.S. 2003/0062969 was filed on Sept 25, 2002. By contrast, Applicants' priority document for the above-identified application was filed on August 6, 2002. A verified translation of Applicants' priority document is enclosed. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

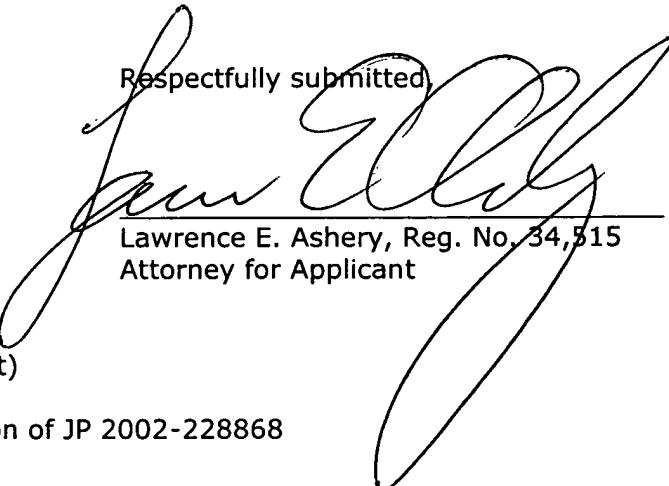
Claims 3-6 and 9-12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Naguchi/Inoue in view of Ikeda (JP 2001-168672). Those claims, however, include all the features of the respective independent claims from which they depend. Thus, those claims are also patentable over the art of record.

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In view of the amendments set forth above, the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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LEA/fp

Attachments: Figure 10 (1 sheet)
Abstract
Verified Translation of JP 2002-228868

Dated: December 14, 2004

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The Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge payment to Deposit Account No. **18-0350** of any fees associated with this communication.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on:

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Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawing includes changes to Figure 10. This sheet replaces the original sheet.